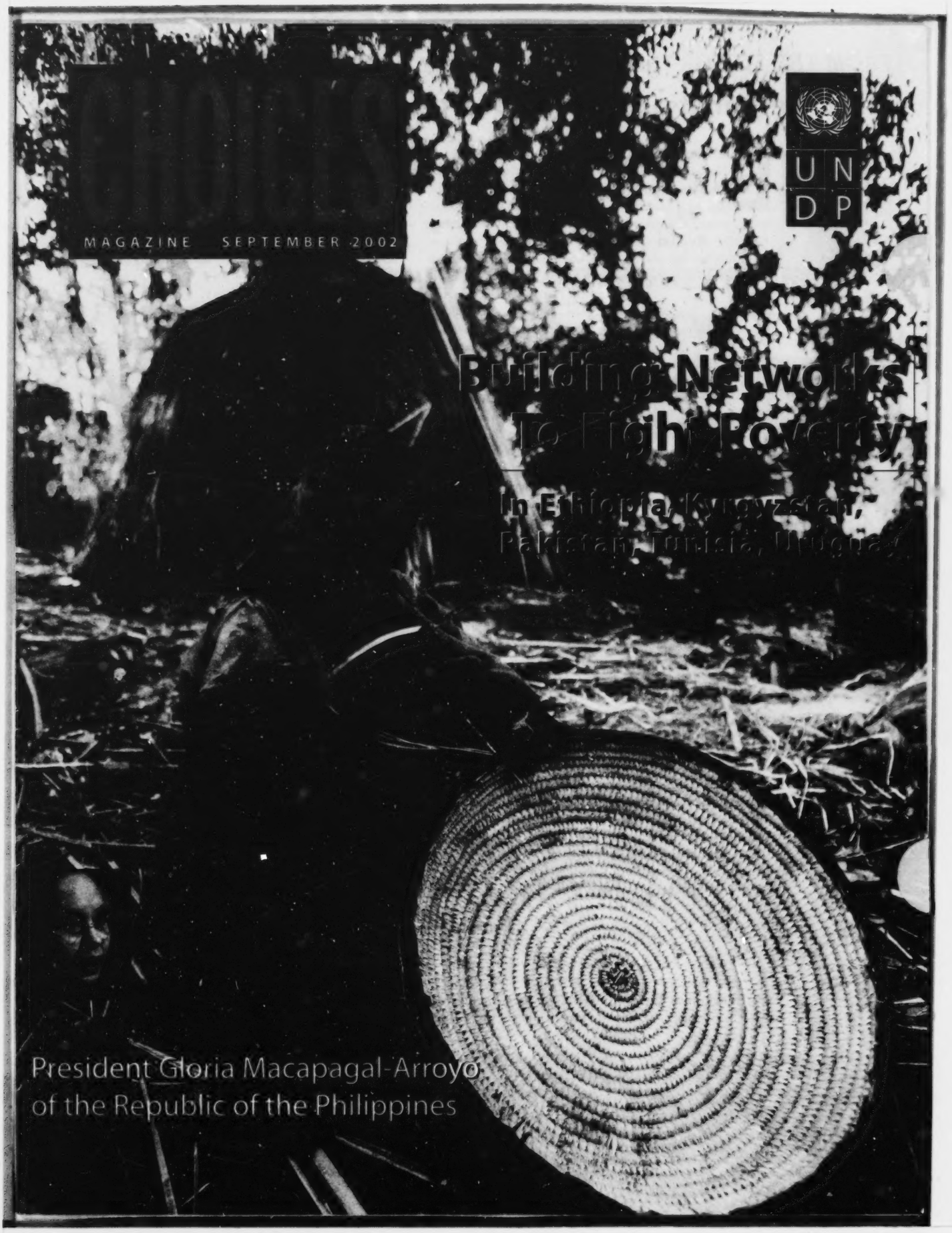

MAGAZINE SEPTEMBER 2002
UN
DP
Building Networks
To Fight Poverty
In Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan,
Pakistan, Tunisia, Uruguay
President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
of the Republic of the Philippines

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Determination to End Poverty

Shamsir Zaman/UNDP

Each year, as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) gets set to launch its latest *Human Development Report* (HDR), it looks for a venue that has real meaning in terms of the Report's main theme.

So when President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines agreed to Manila being the site for the global launch of the HDR—*Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*—nothing could have been more fitting.

It was on the streets of this city that the modern use of the phrase "people power" was born, with the movement that in 1986 led to the ouster of dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Again, in January of 2001, peaceful protests led directly to the departure of another president. The Filipino example has also helped to inspire similar movements in many other parts of the world—including East Timor—which this year became the world's newest democracy.

It has to be said that one cannot be around President Macapagal-Arroyo without being struck by her energy. Known to the public throughout the country by her initials (her staff refer to her as "GMA," too) she is clearly a leader in a hurry. She is also tough—the word I kept hearing being used to describe her the day I had the privilege of spending at the presidential palace for the HDR launch, co-hosted with UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown.

The President's toughness was certainly also in evidence in her latest annual State of the Nation address, delivered to Congress just two days before release of the 2002 report. "I am determined to build a strong Republic by breaking the back of terrorism and criminality," she vowed, adding that the war against poverty in the Philippines, and her emphasis on job creation efforts, are closely linked to that struggle. In her words: "The right to work in peace is as basic as the right to life and liberty, and when both are in danger their preservation by all lawful means becomes not just a higher right but an overriding duty." As an immediate first step, President Macapagal-Arroyo then ordered a national crackdown on smuggling syndicates, and their rampant bribery of public officials.

One of the lessons to be drawn from all of this—and from HDR2002—is that peace, order, good governance and the advancement of democracy are all intimately linked to fairness in society. In the Philippines, for example, impressive progress is being made towards gender equality, with women now accounting for more than one-third of all administrators and managers in the work force—one of the highest proportions anywhere.

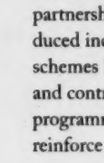
As President Macapagal-Arroyo observes in the feature interview that opens this issue, UNDP is proving crucial to the monitoring of poverty reduction in her nation.

Our country project features this time look at what UNDP is doing to help women empower each other in Ethiopia; support communal self-reliance initiatives in Kyrgyzstan; build infrastructure for impoverished villages in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province; enable partnerships that have produced income-generating schemes in central Tunisia; and contribute to a model programme in Uruguay to reinforce the social safety net for a much-neglected sector of society there. It is through the networking and partnerships exemplified by these successful projects and programmes that UNDP is able to help make a significant difference in people's lives.

Finally, readers of CHOICES will see that we have a striking new corporate logo on the cover of the magazine. Its simplicity and bold blue and white colours reflect the dedication of UNDP staff around the world and on whose behalf they are working. We are present in more developing countries than any other development organization. UNDP's half-century of experience and its reputation as a trusted, effective partner in development enable it to leverage a wealth of knowledge.

Geraldine Rellamas/UNDP

UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown and President of the Philippines Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo launch the 2002 Human Development Report.



Djibril Diallo

Cover: Bahir Dar, Ethiopia. UNDP's development assistance in Ethiopia includes creating sustainable livelihoods to reduce poverty, especially among women and children. Photo: Earl & Nazima Kowall/Corbis

Coming in December

CHOICES

Focus on peacebuilding: UNDP seeks out and shares innovative approaches to crisis prevention and conflict resolution through its global development network. In December, CHOICES looks at what UNDP and partners around the world are doing to help countries head off conflicts or recover from them.

MAGAZINE SEPTEMBER

Volume 11 Number 3

Editor-in-Chief
Djibril Diallo

Editor
David Todd

Managing Editor
Rajeswary Iruthayanathan

Design
Ferro+Ferro Graphic Communication
Arlington, Virginia

Translation Manager
Elizabeth Scott Andrews

Production Manager
Maureen Lynch

Editorial/Production Associate
Jennifer Prince

Distribution
Jose Morales
Shamsur Zaman

Special Advisor to the Editor-in-Chief
Nadine Gordimer

Advisors
Dianne Abbott
Sharon Capeling-Alakija
Mervin Aubeepin
Sandy Close
Inge Kaul
Geoffrey Lean

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life.

CHOICES
is published four times a year by:
Communications Office
Office of the Administrator
United Nations Development Programme
One United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel: (212) 906 5325
Fax: (212) 906 5364
E-mail: choices@undp.org

The articles in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the United Nations Development Programme, nor do the boundaries and names shown on maps imply official endorsement by the United Nations. Articles may be freely reproduced as long as credit is given and tear sheets are provided to the editor. CHOICES is available in English, French and Spanish.

To advertise in CHOICES:
Contact Rajeswary Iruthayanathan (212) 906-5327 in UNDP New York.

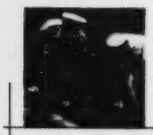
The printed matter is recyclable. Phønix-Trykkeriet A/S, Aarhus, Denmark. ISO 14001 certified and EMAS-approved.

4 Commentary
Champions of a New Way of Development
By Mark Malloch Brown

5 Interview
President of the Philippines Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

7 Essay
Are the Millennium Development Goals Feasible?
By Jan Vandemoortele

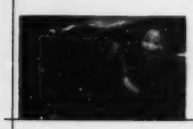
BUILDING NETWORKS TO FIGHT POVERTY



9 Building Self-reliance in Kyrgyzstan
By Leila Saralaeva

12 Empowering Women in Ethiopia
By Tsegaye Tadesse

14 The Quest for Water in Pakistan
By Rina Saeed Khan



16 Progressive Partnerships to Fight Poverty in Tunisia
By Anis Souadi

18 Reinforcing Social Safety Nets in Uruguay
By Pablo Vierci

20 Viewpoints
20 A Global Compact With Solid Foundations
By Gordon Brown

21 City-to-City Networking to Fight Poverty
By Anne-Marie Lizin

22 Notebook
22 New Era of Partnership in Africa
By Cassandra Waldon

22 Call for Greater Pluralism and Diversity
By Ian Williams

23 Measurable Results Make all the Difference
By David Todd

24 A Different Kind of Looking-Glass
By David Woolcombe

25 Inaugural Equator Prize Awarded
By David Todd

26 UNDP Goodwill Ambassador
HIV/AIDS and Africa's Poverty
By Danny Glover

28 Matters of Fact

Visit CHOICES: www.undp.org/dpa

COMMENTARY

Milton Grant/UNDP

Mark Malloch Brown

Champions of a New Way of Development

In this year's World Cup of Football staged in Japan and Korea, the eight quarterfinalists included teams not only from five continents, but countries from all stages of development. These ranged from middle income Brazil—the game's traditional powerhouse—to a least developed country like Senegal and the United States, an economic giant but traditional football minnow.

Global parity on the soccer pitch has been achieved by sustained capacity development in weaker countries. Through an open global marketplace with limited protectionism and easy technology transfers in the form of coaching and playing techniques, several such nations have successfully grafted global best practices onto local knowledge and expertise. From Korean precision in the game to Senegalese flair, there have been very beneficial results across the board.

But if football represents a global opportunity seized, sustainable development has remained a global challenge where too many opportunities have been missed.

There are signs, however, that the world is finally coming together to answer this scoring deficit effectively.

Two years ago, at the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York, world leaders pledged to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including the overarching one of cutting poverty in half by 2015. Then, at the UN Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey in March, those leaders took another step forward by agreeing on the outlines of a global deal by which rich nations would provide the necessary support in trade, aid and other resources to develop countries that commit themselves to achieving solid political, social and economic reforms. Both the European Union and the United States made welcome commitments of new aid to help drive this vision forward.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as the UN's global development network, is playing a central role in making this global deal work effectively in practice to help people build better lives. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges, while connecting them to knowledge, experience and resources from around the world.

UNDP/Senegal

Mark Malloch Brown greets villagers in Senegal.

A key focal point of our work is capacity development—helping to build effective institutions that are based on democratic participation and accountability at all levels of society. Such institutions are needed to ensure delivery of services to the poor, be they clean water, basic health care or justice. Even economic opportunity, where the private sector must take the lead, requires an enabling environment that government has to help provide.

This issue of CHOICES provides some outstanding examples of how UNDP is contributing to nationally developed and agreed initiatives in countries ranging from Ethiopia to Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tunisia and Uruguay. Let me cite some others:

In recent months, UNDP has successfully supported historic elections from East Timor to Sierra Leone. In Nicaragua, UNDP is backing the work of a National Judicial Commission, appointed by the country's President, that is recommending constitutional amendments and new laws to enable people to regain confidence in the judicial system.

In Afghanistan, UNDP has been the key UN organization on the ground responsible for meeting the Interim Authority's most immediate needs—not least of which is paying the salaries of civil servants. Now UNDP is taking an active role in strengthening Afghanistan's emergent government—by supporting the work of the country's transitional *Loya Jirga*-named administration, police, civil service and judicial commissions and through helping the country's people begin to reap the rewards of peace.

In Brazil, UNDP is linking advocacy, policy and project in a powerful partnership with the government aimed at improving low school enrolment and performance among the country's poorest families.

These examples show that we can continue to build on the momentum of the past year, and the exciting new partnerships emerging between the UN system, civil society, governments, and others that are now opening up around the MDGs. I think we have every chance of harnessing the new global commitment for change to build a safer and more prosperous world for everybody. ■

Mark Malloch Brown is Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

INTERVIEW

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines

In an exclusive interview with CHOICES Magazine, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines describes her approach to poverty alleviation, challenges for government and civil society, and where she sees gains being made in achieving social and economic progress in her nation of 83 million people.

How do you define poverty? As the leader of a country that you often describe as one of vast potential yet enormous disparities, what does poverty mean to you?

In 1997, when I was still a Senator, I was one of the principal sponsors of Republic Act 8425, otherwise known as the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act. Here we define poverty not only as a condition in which an individual's or a family's income is below a certain threshold, but it is also the inability to meet basic needs. In my first State of the Nation address, I identified these basic necessities as jobs, shelter, education and food. Without these being fulfilled, a person cannot achieve that sense of dignity and confidence to be a productive member of Philippine society.

What do you regard as the greatest challenge that faces humanity in mounting a serious campaign to eliminate poverty?

In my recent pronouncements, I have articulated terrorism as a short-term challenge to reducing poverty. As the threat of insecurity increases, it is difficult for government, non-government organizations and even individual families to provide for their own basic needs. In the longer-term, the greatest challenge remains the lack of economic and political opportunities for the poor and the marginalized groups. To address this, we have emphasized a sectoral and social bias towards the disadvantaged in our economic development plan. This is anchored on the redistribution of economic opportunities and enhancing the capabilities of the poor to participate in decision-making.

The provision of employment and livelihood opportunities stands out as the major challenge in addressing poverty and inequality.

In the case of the Philippines and Southeast Asia, in which fields do you see the greatest gains being made when it comes to achieving social and economic progress? In which ones are problems of poverty and inequality proving most difficult to overcome?

It is in the field of trade. Trade, through increasing globalization and economic integration, stimulates entrepreneurship, creates jobs, attracts capital, increases foreign earnings and fosters vital learning processes. These are the tools for sustainable development and the reduction of poverty. The provision of employment and livelihood opportunities stands out as the major challenge to address poverty and inequality. Thus, we are creating a domestic environment that will enable us to reap the benefits of the global economic integration while minimizing the risks to the adversely affected sectors.

As leader of the Philippines, what challenges do you face in managing a democracy while accelerating efforts to reduce poverty?

I came to power as President on the shoulders of people power. Therefore, my loyalty is not to any one group but to the citizenry. I view democratic governance as important to achieving a broad and national consensus on poverty reduction. It is not enough that government provides a framework for undertaking poverty reduction thrusts. It is likewise important that other stakeholders contribute to these thrusts.

I view democratic governance as important to achieving a broad and national consensus on poverty reduction.

Rafer Marquez/UNDP

What value is UNDP adding to your country's efforts in the areas that you have just described?

UNDP has always been a partner of the Philippine Government. It has assisted in the institutionalization of poverty monitoring and assessments crucial in the government's poverty reduction thrust. This year, UNDP and the Philippine Government are engaged in the implementation of the Empowerment of the Poor Portfolio for 2002-2004.

Expanding job opportunities is a key element of the national poverty reduction plan: peanut farming (top); furniture making (right); fish farming (bottom).

There are also portfolios of ensuring environmental sustainability, on the strengthening of the foundations for lasting peace and development in the southern Philippines, and for good governance. All these are geared towards the attainment of a better quality of life for the Filipino.

Would you describe the key components of the strategy behind your country's National Programme to Alleviate Poverty and Enable Sustainable Livelihoods? What are the benchmarks of success?

My vision of winning the battle against poverty has four key components; I announced these benchmarks during my State of the Nation address last year. The first is a philosophy of free enterprise appropriate to the 21st Century. Second is a sectoral and social basis in our economic development plan. A modernized agricultural sector founded on social equality is a third. And finally, improving moral standards in government and in society.

Where do you see the Philippines in terms of poverty reduction in five years time?

I am confident that the incidence of poverty in the Philippines will have been reduced. Most of our State of the Nation address targets are on track, and economic conditions are favourable for increased employment and livelihood opportunities. ■

Contributor: Terence D. Jones, UNDP Resident Representative in the Philippines.

Are the Millennium Development Goals Feasible?

BY IAN VANDEMOORTELE

Poverty has many faces; it means going hungry, not being able to send your child to school or not knowing how to read and write, not having access to safe drinking water, not being able to visit a health centre when ill. Poverty is also about insecurity, voicelessness and being excluded socially. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) express key dimensions of human development in a set of numerical and time-bound poverty reduction targets. They include halving income-poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education and gender equality; reducing under-five mortality by two-thirds and maternal mortality by three-quarters; reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS; and halving the proportion of people without access to safe water. These targets are to be achieved by 2015, the comparison point being 1990 levels.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has asked UN Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator Mark Malloch Brown, in his capacity as chair of the UN Development Group, to serve as "scorekeeper" and "campaign manager" for the MDGs: to keep the eyes of the world on them. This is a priority within UNDP's overarching mission to assist developing countries in reducing poverty.

UNDP is an advocate for nationally-owned solutions to reduce poverty through action rooted in strong partnerships and inclusive participation. It sponsors innovative pilot projects; supports poverty monitoring and analysis at the country level; provides policy advice; and it shares knowledge of good practices. UNDP also connects countries to global knowledge networks and promotes equity and gender equality in the quest to alleviate poverty. It helps bring governments, civil society organizations, private sector representatives and outside partners together to achieve coordinated and effective responses to the poverty challenge.

It is often said that global targets are easily set but seldom met. This begs the question of whether the MDGs are feasible. Progress in over 130 developing countries regarding the many dimensions of human development—such as education, health, nutrition and income—is difficult to summarize. The 1990s saw many success stories, including in relation to education in Guinea and Malawi; HIV/AIDS in Senegal, Thailand and Uganda; child mortality in Bangladesh and Gambia; nutrition in Indonesia, Mexico and Tunisia; and income-poverty in China.

But for each success story, there have been setbacks. The under-five mortality rate rose in Cambodia, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia—an unprecedented trend after decades of steady decline. The primary school enrolment ratio dropped in Cameroon, Lesotho, Mozambique and Tanzania. The gender gap in primary education widened in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Namibia. Instead of decreasing, malnutrition grew in Burkina Faso and Yemen. Access to water became more difficult for millions of people; Bangladesh faced a major problem with arsenic water poisoning. In the 1990s, numerous countries saw their HIV prevalence rate double, triple, quadruple, in some cases even increase 10-fold—severely undermining the feasibility of reaching most MDGs, in health and beyond.

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

■ Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
1.2 billion people still live on less than US$1 a day. But 43 countries, with more than 60 percent of the world's people, have already met or are on track to meet the goal of cutting hunger in half by 2015.

■ Achieve universal primary education
113 million children do not attend school, but this goal is within reach; India, for example, should have 95 percent of its children in school by 2005.

■ Promote gender equality and empower women
Two-thirds of the world's illiterates are women, and 80 percent of its refugees are women and children. But UNIFEM's successful microcredit programmes have increased their outreach to poor women by more than 80 percent in just two years.

■ Reduce child mortality
and reduce under-five mortality by two-thirds; 11 million young children die every year, but that number is down from 15 million in 1980.

■ Improve maternal health and
reduce maternal mortality by three-quarters. In the developing world, the risk of dying in childbirth is one in 48. But virtually all countries now have safe motherhood programmes and are poised for progress.

■ Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
that have erased a generation of development gains. Countries like Brazil, Senegal and Thailand have shown that we can stop HIV in its tracks.

■ Ensure environmental sustainability
More than one billion people still lack access to safe drinking water—but nearly one billion gained access to safe water, and one billion gained access to sanitation, during the 1990s.

■ Develop a global partnership for development,
with targets for aid, trade and debt relief. Too many developing countries are spending more on debt service than on social services. New aid commitments made in the first half of 2002 alone, though, will reach an additional $12 billion per year by 2006.

There is no good reason why universal primary education should not yet be a practical reality.

MDG reporting: a new mandate

The UN system is supporting national efforts to prepare MDG-progress reports at the country level. Their main purpose is to go beyond informing specialists and officials by bringing key development issues to the attention of a much wider public through concise, readable, jargon-free information. This is an ambitious task, involving media-savvy communications and campaign experts who know how to distil complex realities into succinct messages.

Surveying the bigger picture at present, of seven MDG targets for which reasonably reliable global data exist, six are off track. Current data on global poverty, based on the norm of US$1 per day, are simply not robust enough to make an informed judgement as to whether the world is on track to meeting the 2015 targets.

Little or no progress has been achieved in reversing the HIV/AIDS pandemic; HIV prevalence rates continue to rise in numerous countries. Only a few have succeeded in reducing the spread of HIV, as Cambodia and Uganda have done. In many countries, failure to contain the pandemic threatens to halt and even reverse progress in relation to other MDGs while placing additional strains on social service delivery and available resources.

Progress has been slow as regards targets for child mortality, basic education, malnutrition, maternal mortality and gender discrimination in primary enrolment. In each of these cases progress amounted to about one-quarter or less of the agreed targets between 1990 and 2000. Since the MDGs are to be achieved between 1990 and 2015, 40 percent of the road should have been covered by 2000. Only a fifth of the education target was achieved in the first 10 years, leaving 80 percent to be covered in 60 percent of the time period between 2000 and 2015. No matter what the challenge is—HIV/AIDS, child mortality, malnutrition, income-poverty, maternal health, gender discrimination or environmental degradation—basic education is a central part of the solution. Failure to keep the promise to give each and every child a good basic education will undermine the chances of reaching the other MDGs.

There is no good reason why universal primary education should not yet be a practical reality. Progress towards that goal is truly discouraging: its global cost is perfectly affordable; no new technology breakthroughs are needed to get all children in school; there is consensus that it makes good economic sense; and basic education is a fundamental human right that ought not to be denied to any child. But if these conditions are insufficient to ensure success, then the question arises: what will it take to meet the other MDGs?

The road ahead

The only target that is on track is the one for halving the proportion of people without access to safe water by 2015. However, the current rate of progress may not be sustainable; countless countries face acute water shortages in the near future if no swift and decisive action is taken soon. Wastage, population growth, urbanization and desertification are gradually leading to looming water scarcity in many parts of the world; industrialization and modern agriculture are adding to the risk of more water pollution. Future conflicts over allocation of fresh water resources are likely to slow down progress in the years to come.

Not only has global progress been inadequate, but much of it has bypassed the poor. There are different ways for reaching a global or national target. At one extreme, it can be achieved by improving the situation of the already better-off segments of society—a top-down approach. At the other extreme, a target can be achieved by improving the situation of the worse-off population. The evidence suggests that most countries come closer to following the top-down rather than the latter bottom-up approach.

While the MDGs remain unfulfilled, they also remain feasible and affordable. Committed leadership, stronger partnerships, extra resources, and deeper participation by the poor can bring the world back on track towards the MDGs. UNDP will continue to harness national and international political commitment to long-term strategies for reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs.

As matters stand, while the world is not on track to meeting the MDG targets there remains the haunting question that Nelson Mandela has raised: "Will our legacy be more than a series of broken promises?" Two decades ago, James Grant, the late Executive Director of the UN Children's Fund put the essential challenge this way: "The problem is not that we have tried to eradicate global poverty and failed; the problem is that no serious and concerted attempt has ever been made."

If these words still ring true today, they cannot be allowed to remain so. It is not too late to realise the dream by 2015. ■

Jan Vandemoortele is Principal Adviser and Group Leader of UNDP's Socio-economic Development Group.

Building Self-reliance in Kyrgyzstan

BY LEILA SARALAEVA

AK-JAR, KYRGYZSTAN

When Gzhegosh Kukharchik, a United Nations Volunteer (UNV), first came to this village southwest of the capital Bishkek several years ago what met his eye was no pretty picture. The land was mostly fallow. The residents, who had been allowed two cows per family under former communist rule, had for the most part sold them off. Alcoholism and drug abuse were rampant in what had deteriorated into being one of the poorest villages in this mountainous, sparsely populated nation.

Mr. Kukharchik had been sent here four years ago to talk to people about the possibility of a governmental agency lending them money and teaching them how to make their own business plans to lift themselves out of their economic misery. The villagers were less than impressed. "You won't deceive us," he recalls one telling him. "If you want to give us money, just do it. But we're not going to listen to your stories."

For this is the one that they had been living:

A decade earlier, Ak-Jar had been a proud part of what was known as a Lenin Kolkhoz, a collective farm complex of a kind that had had a reputation in former times as the Soviet Union's most productive sort. Their workers enjoyed an abundance of meat, milk, fruit and vegetables; families of six children were commonplace. Meanwhile, the Soviet agriculture ministry officials made all key planning decisions.

Then the villagers suddenly found themselves bereft of the skills needed to run the collective farms on their own. "Our former communist masters privatized the best land and took it for themselves," says local farmer Ibraim Baratakunov. "Simple people like us were happy to get any land at all, but what were we supposed to do with it? We didn't have any machinery to process it, no seeds to plant, and no experience." For many, especially young people, the solution seemed to lie in escaping to the capital, Bishkek; high school students here graduated and left home only to end up trying to eke out a living working at the city's bazaars as street traders.

One group in Ak-Jar refused to give up. Despite salaries that had shrivelled to the equivalent of less than US$20 a month, teachers kept on teaching, while searching for ways to keep the social fabric of their community from fraying further. They determined that what young people there really needed to lift their spirits, at least, was a community sports centre. "We

Agricultural land once part of Soviet collective farms is becoming productive again under private ownership.

The face of community pride.

Photos: Alexander Fedorov/UNDP

Photos: Alexander Fedorov/UNDP

Beautiful but remote, economic progress in the northern reaches of Kyrgyzstan has been hampered by their inaccessibility.

understood that only sport could save them," recalls Tologon Abraliev, who at the time was the principal of Ak-Jar's high school. "So we gathered the villagers and persuaded them that only we could build it," he adds. "They agreed and everyone made a contribution. Somebody brought a couple of bricks, another brought logs, somebody slaughtered a sheep to feed the workers, and the rest actually did the building."

Learning new ways

Then Mr. Kukharchik arrived here as part of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Participatory Poverty Alleviation Programme, which identified Ak-Jar as a priority target for assistance, under the Government of Kyrgyzstan's National Programme on Overcoming Poverty. UNDP had intervened at the government's request to assist isolated communities that felt abandoned and lost as to how to rebuild themselves. UNDP is working with them on their own solutions to national development challenges.

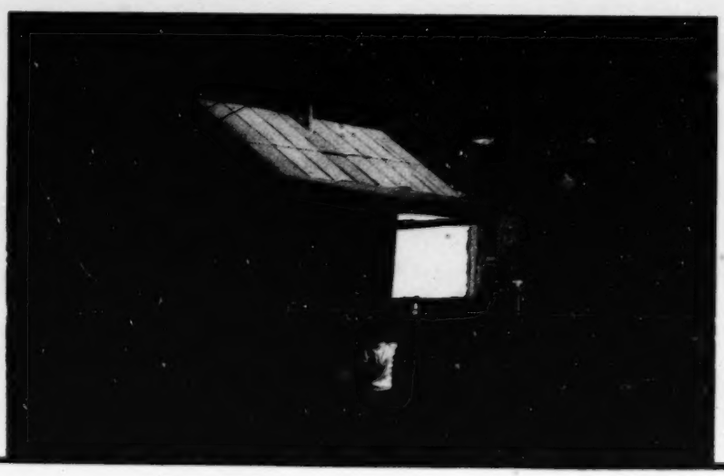
Thanks to the support of an outspoken local farmer a micro-credit project quickly took hold. At first, "we had no idea how to write business plans, what the word 'credit' meant or how to make repayments," Mr. Baratakunov recalls. Today, he heads a 139-member group in Ak-Jar whose members borrow regularly from UNDP's national partner, the World Bank-supported Kyrgyz Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC). "I still remember the first time each self-help group member received their money; it was in the schoolyard," says Mr. Baratakunov. "For my first loan of 8,000 Soms (about $200) I bought a cow and seeds for planting. In a year of selling milk and potatoes, I paid it back with interest and kept the cow. And when we paid our first loans back on time, we were offered a second one—this time for 12,000 Soms ($300) over two years."

Mr. Baratakunov now considers himself part of his country's nascent middle class. Besides having a profitable small farm with its cow, five sheep, a horse and a vegetable patch, he helps others develop their personal business plans. All here agree that four years after the UNDP-led programme started, the village looks markedly more prosperous, what with its mosque, hospital, telephone service and a watermill. An irrigation canal is being restored. A steady stream of leaders from villages in the *oblast* or province of Talas passes through here to learn from Ak-Jar's experience.

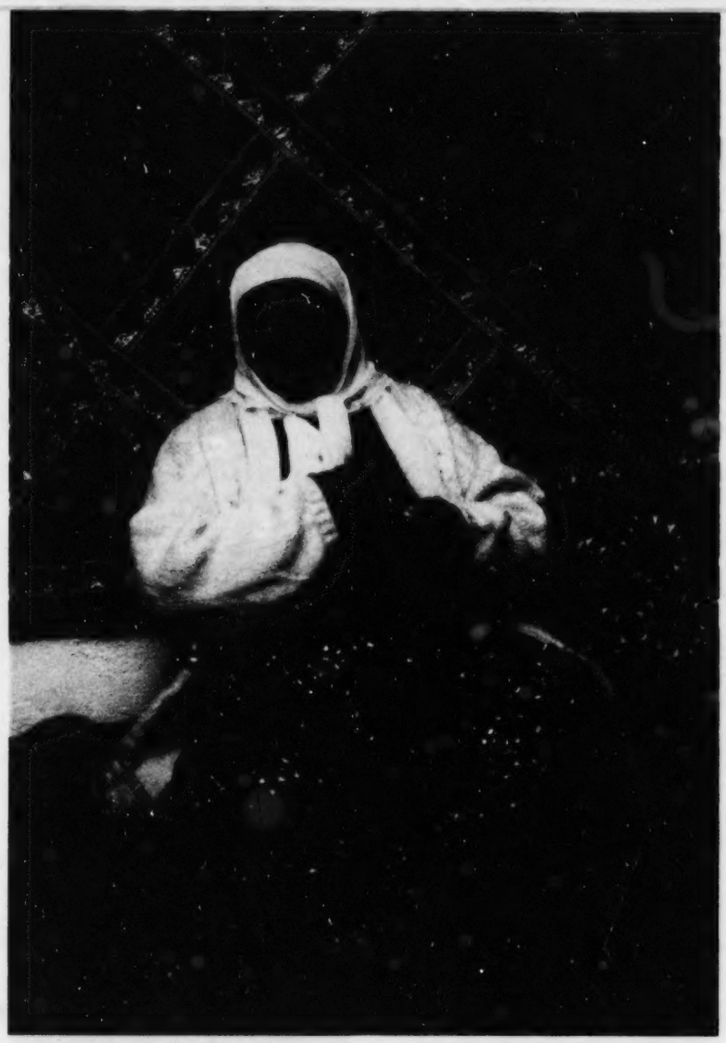
Reliable partners, re-born dreams

According to Damira Bugubaeva, deputy governor of Talas, "if Ak-Jar's people have managed to organize the self-help groups and work so successfully, why shouldn't other villages?" Since 1998 the Kyrgyz AFC has assigned about $450,000 to Ak-Jar and other Talas communities. "Each year we work with 300 self-help groups," says AFC credit expert Sergei Sedykh. "In Ak-Jar the loan repayment rate is 100 percent. They are such reliable partners that we have established a bank here."

High school graduation day has special meaning here. Getting a diploma is no longer an automatic reason to leave town.



Villages like Ak-Jar are targeted for assistance under the country's national poverty alleviation programme.



Communities that have benefited from the national poverty alleviation programme are more prosperous now.

"I dream that in a few years all the village will come to my lake and rest. I will arrange boats, and people can fish and swim here," he says. ■

Leila Saralaeva is a reporter with the weekly Delo N *newspaper in Bishkek.*

If the statistics sound impressive, some of the individual testimonials come across as more so. Amid the social and economic strains of the new nation's birth, Buzurman Eshenaliev left Ak-Jar and ended up joining the ranks of the alcoholic homeless in Bishkek. After years of despair, he willed himself to repair his life and returned home, where his old classmate, Tologon Abraliev—the schoolteacher—talked him into setting up a self-help group for reformed down-and-outs such as himself.

Mr. Eshenaliev applied for a plot of land and while all the choice ones had been distributed by then, there did remain a plot of land next to a marsh. He took it, cleared it, drained the marsh and then stocked it with trout. Armed with a $100 loan he bought four calves, and repaid his debt by selling two of them once they had matured. Then he took a second loan, bought a cow and another calf, and built a small house. He got married. He and his wife now have a son, Kolbay: the name means "rich lake."

One family's success story: Microcredit helped turn swampland into a profitable fish farm.

BUILDING NETWORKS TO FIGHT POVERTY

Empowering Women in Ethiopia

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TSEGAYE TADESSE

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

As in many of the world's poorest lands, the vast majority of households here in sub-Saharan Africa's second most populous nation depend on fuelwood, charcoal, animal dung and other forms of "biomass" for cooking and heating purposes. It is a practice that, aside from causing increasing deforestion, ravages rural ecosystems and deepens the vicious cycle of poverty experienced.

Burden no woman should bear.

In and around this city of 2.5 million people, much of the work of collecting such fuel is done by women and children, including an estimated 15,000 women and children who eke out a living by illegally cutting stems and branches from trees in forests just outside the capital. It is backbreaking labour that requires the fuelwood gatherers to walk an average of about 12 kilometres each day—and some of them double this distance—while carrying bundles on their backs of as much as 35 kilogrammes or more. Women carriers are estimated by authorities here to provide more than one-third of Addis Ababa's total urban woodfuels supply.

Such women are "among the poorest and most underprivileged in Ethiopian society," says Samuel Nyambi, the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator in Ethiopia. "Ethiopian women have for years been suffering from various discriminatory practices in society." In addition, compared to Ethiopian men, "women enjoy less access to basic social services, such as health and education," he says.

Working to develop the capacity of women to gain access to economic and other resources and opportunities necessary to escape destitution is a key objective of UNDP's efforts in Ethiopia to address the gender dimension of poverty. One way is through its support for the Association of Former Women Fuelwood Carriers (AFWFC), led by Etenesh Ayele. Now 33, Ms. Ayele began her working life at 14, picking leaves and cutting twigs on Entoto Mountain, high above Addis Ababa. Along with other women she used to earn about two Birr (equivalent to US$.25 cents) a day, toting bundles that at times weighed up to 50 kilogrammes, she says.

Up from misery

Ms. Ayele recalls with horror the nine years she spent as a fuelwood gatherer. "It was a degrading life full of humiliation and shame," she says. "We were often victims of rape and beatings by hoodlums who hid themselves in the forest. The heavy loads and long distances we covered each day also had a debilitating impact on us: some of us have deformed spinal columns. The incidence of miscarriages among us fuelwood carriers was quite high."

Above and right: Vocational training has enabled many women to make decent incomes working at crafts such as weaving.

Another hazard was confiscation by forest rangers of the hard-earned goods

Right: Members of the Former Fuelwood Carriers Association work to address the gender dimension of poverty.

from their scavenging efforts. "There was no law to protect us because what we were doing was illegal," adds Ms. Ayele.

Today, with the help of a $126,000 UNDP grant, the 764 members of her advocacy association are working in four capacity-building projects that have provided them training in such fields as weaving, basket making and dairy farming. Ms. Ayele herself has been trained in management and accounting.

Other members of the AFWFC shared their stories of having risen from the misery they experienced in their early lives to the level of dignity and self-worth that they feel now.

Meshet Yesu, 25, began carrying wood at the age of nine, together with her mother, after whose death she was left responsible along with her day labourer father for raising three younger sisters. "Today, I earn a decent income as a weaver," says Ms. Yesu. "I'm also able to send my three sisters to school and care for my father." Fellow weaver Ayeletch Demisse, a 56-year-old widow with five children, has been able to send them all to school with her earnings.

Meanwhile, Mr. Nyambi points out that, aside from income generation itself, "UNDP is assisting in building the institutional capacity of the association of former fuelwood carriers by providing them with vocational training to help them set up individual and joint business activities."

Major partner in development

UNDP, as one of Ethiopia's major partners in development, plays a significant role through poverty alleviation interventions in almost all major sectors of the nation's economy. About 30 million people—45 percent of the country's population—live in absolute poverty and they face poverty on a day-to-day basis, according to the 2002-2004 UN Development Assistance Framework in Ethiopia.

In the face of this reality, UNDP's efforts are intended to mesh with development aspirations that the country has defined. The first Country Cooperation Framework of 2001 between the Government of Ethiopia and UNDP centres on capacity-building, water resources development, agricultural development, education and health priorities, among others. Since 1991, UNDP has allocated more than $33 million to help improve administration and economic and political governance. It has also earmarked $12 million in support of the country's educational sector development programme.

With the help of international organizations, including UNDP, Ethiopia has been recovering from the deterioration of the late 1980s, when millions of people perished due to famine induced by devastating drought. Addressing the root causes of poverty and building capacity for "bottom-up" planning to develop community-identified programmes has been key. Addressing the vulnerability of people, particularly women, is a central element of UNDP's strategy for helping to strengthen the government's capacity and enhancing public participation in development planning. ■

Former fuelwood carriers and their children.

Tsegaye Tadesse reports from Addis Ababa for Reuters.

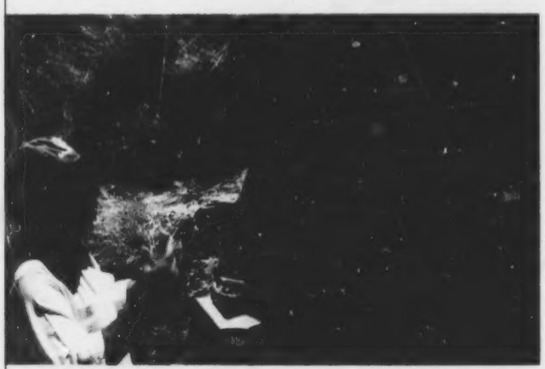
BUILDING NETWORKS TO FIGHT POVERTY

The Quest for Water in Pakistan

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RINA SAEED KHAN

DARWAZAI BANDA, PAKISTAN

"We can live without electricity, but we can't live without water," says Shazia Bibi, a 26-year-old mother of three, smiling shyly at having to speak up in front of the other women with her. "We thank God that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) came and helped us to make this dam." They are seated on string beds inside a house of mud and stone that serves as their community meeting place, in this remote village in Lachi, one of the poorest areas of the Kohat District in Pakistan's rugged North-West Frontier Province. The province borders Afghanistan and is populated mostly by conservative Pushtun-speaking tribes.



Cooperation between communities is critical to dealing with water shortages in this arid region.

Darwazai Banda, 220 kilometres southwest of the capital Islamabad, is little more than a cluster of houses located on one slope of the barren, rocky hills typical of the arid Kohat District. Here in this rain-fed district water is so scarce that young women like Mrs. Bibi used to have to spend anywhere from four to six hours a day fetching it from tiny natural springs located higher in the hills. Often the springs would dry up, forcing the women to go even further in search of precious drinking water for their large families—whose average size is eight members. In the blistering summer months, they would be forced to journey twice a day with their plastic buckets loaded onto donkeys—a time-consuming and backbreaking ordeal.

Now, thanks to the small earth-filled dam built in a nearby catchment area, rainwater is collected in a reservoir and pumped directly to all the village households. The project is the product of cooperation between the community and the Lachi Poverty Reduction Programme (LPRP), a US$5.7 million joint initiative of UNDP and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). The purpose of the LPRP is to improve the livelihoods of more than 100,000 people living in this area of Kohat by harnessing their economic and social potential. The larger aim is to develop and promote a model for rural poverty reduction that can be applied to other parts of Pakistan—one of more than 166 countries where UNDP is working as a trusted partner with governments, civil society and the private sector to help them arrive at their own solutions to global and national development challenges.

In Darwazai Banda, rainwater is collected in a reservoir and pumped directly to its 70 homes. The dam was built by LPRP engineers with project funding, while the villagers contributed land and labour. The rains are extremely variable; sometimes they fail almost completely. But when full, the dam's reservoir is capable of supplying the village's needs for as long as two years. Darwazai Banda has been lucky in that it still contains water despite yet another year's severe drought conditions.

Communities deciding priorities

Other villages in the district have also benefited from water conservation measures. In the past five years, at a cost of $650,000, LPRP has built 115 dams and wells in the area, along flood protection walls and water-courses; these schemes benefit some 6,900 households in the area. Rather than approach villagers with any set agenda the LPRP asks communities to identify their priorities, which are then addressed through appropriate projects. Scarcity of water stands out as the most pressing problem, and with only about 40 percent of households in Lachi with access to delivered water as yet, much remains to be done.

In Darwazai Banda, which in 1997 was one of the first communities to get a dam, a villagers' association has even stocked the reservoir with thousands of fish. In winter these are harvested and sold at market for about $1.20 a kilogramme, income much needed in a region of few industries and paying jobs. The most favoured employment for the hardy Pathan tribesmen living in the area is with the Pakistan army, which has a strong presence in the nearby town of Kohat.

There are only small land-holdings in Lachi and agriculture is limited to the

More than 100,000 people are benefitting from the $5.7 million Lachi poverty reduction programme.

Improving the means of delivering water is a priority in Lachi.

rain catchment areas. As a result, there is scant water for agricultural purposes like the growing of wheat and fruits such as lemons, pomegranates and watermelons. LPRP has tried to improve agricultural practices by introducing new, rain-fed varieties of wheat, providing credit to farmers to assist in seed purchasing and with the implementation of conservation and irrigation techniques.

Despite or because of the scarcity of resources in this harsh region, the local people are accustomed to cooperation between communities. Sometimes, when rainfall has been scarce, the water in one reservoir dries up and villagers are forced to trek to another to draw supplies. "We do not refuse water to anyone," says Mohammed Ibrahim, a Councillor from Darwazai Banda who came to office in local elections as part of the government's Devolution Plan 2000. "I have told the women that they must share the water, even if they have to give someone water from their last *garba* (earthenware pot for storing water inside the house)," he says. The women of his family nod in agreement.

Women's emerging leadership role

Meanwhile, in the nearby town of Shakardara, where the LPRP has a field office, female staff are enthusiastic in describing how women stood as candidates for local Union Council elections in which several seats were reserved for women. Most of those who won office were from community organizations set up by the LPRP—evidence the project has succeeded in grooming them as future leaders for their area of this traditionally male-dominated society.

In 2001 and until recently, because of conflict across the border in Afghanistan, tensions were running high. "It was a bad time for us, but since the fall of the Taliban, these elements have been much less visible," says LPRP field engineer Ataullah Khan. "Most of the villagers cooperate with us. They realize that we are trying to help them to solve their problems," he adds. Uncowed by physical threats against them, women of the area continued their training sessions in market gardening, poultry farming, solid waste management, livestock husbandry, micro-credit and handicrafts.

"The villagers of Lachi have shown by example that development is about collaboration and perseverance," says UNDP Resident Representative Onder Yucer. "There's no doubt intervention has helped, but it's the people themselves, their high level of motivation, their desire to better their lives and their remarkable ability to learn that has helped to make such a difference possible."

For her part, Shazia Bibi says: "We want to solve other problems now, maybe start a literacy programme. We can't do much without education." She points to her six-year-old daughter, who attends primary school.

"It will be different for her. She won't ever have to spend hours fetching water. She will have the time to do other things with her life." ■

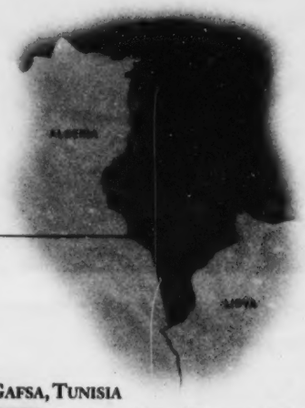
Rina Saeed Khan writes for the Friday Times, *an independent weekly in Pakistan. She is also a stringer for BBC Newsnight.*

Darwazai Banda: Where women used to have to trek six hours a day to haul water for their households.

BUILDING NETWORKS TO FIGHT POVERTY

Progressive Partnerships to Fight Poverty in Tunisia

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANIS SOUADI



GAFSA, TUNISIA

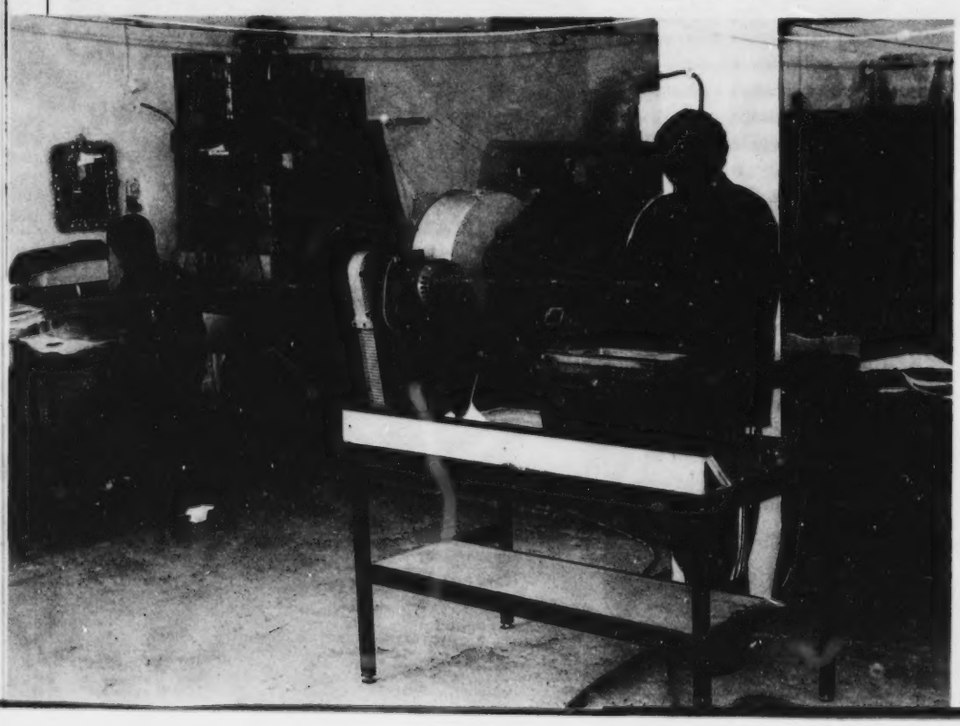
This nation of 10 million people has made enormous progress since the 1960s in reducing poverty. By the late 1990s, about six percent of Tunisians were classified as very poor, down from 33 percent three decades earlier. But while steady economic growth, a strong job-creation record and national poverty-alleviation programmes have been key to this success, deprivation in rural areas—where two of every five Tunisians live—remains a big cause for concern.

Yet here in Gafsa, near the edge of the Sahara Desert some 400 kilometres south of the capital Tunis, a US$2.2 million programme funded by the Government of Italy and administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is stimulating local economic development. Several Italian municipalities and regions are together contributing about a further $1 million to the Local Human Development Framework Programme (LHDP), as Tunisian authorities, non-governmental organizations and private sector interests work side by side with UNDP and other partners in an innovative pilot experiment to address some of the most pressing needs of the poorest sectors of society in this region.

Construction of a factory and training centre has created much-needed jobs in the area.

The originality of the scheme lies in its participatory approach. "Farmers of the agricultural cooperatives have identified their own needs and sought solutions to their problems by contributing to the launch of projects for improved milk production, which now play a key role in the region's economic redevelopment," says Benedetta Oddo of the UN Office for Project Services, and Chief Technical Adviser to the LHDP in Gafsa. She works in close cooperation with the Tunisian National Solidarity Fund, the government's primary mechanism for development work in remote regions of the countryside. One outcome here has been the establishment of a local cheese factory. Other projects involve helping to protect the health of dairy cattle and restoration of ancient Berber grottoes in the area, as part of a tourism development strategy.

Italian development assistance supports the Gafsa poverty alleviation programme through support to disabled workers (below) and hospitals (far right).



Building a more inclusive society

The LHDP framework—launched as a follow-up to commitments Tunisia made at the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development—aims to combat the social exclusion of marginalized people. With LHDP financing, for example, a project to produce aromatic herbs and package them with recycled materials has been set up to provide employment for mentally disabled people. "Thanks to improved management and the enthusiasm of the trainees, the recycling workshop, besides providing training, has actually begun to turn out goods," explains workshop instructor Nejia Hlaïel. "With the LHDP's funding and technical assistance it has been possible to upgrade production from handicraft to semi-industrial status," adds Chokri Khoualdia, head of the training section.

The social workshop is intended to eventually become a cooperative that pays regular wages. Sixteen-year-old Gharbi Gassem, one of the disabled trainees, says he looks forward to the opening of the cooperative so that he can "become a fully-fledged worker." He explains that he feels like a much stronger person now. "I want to help the Tunisian Union for Assistance to the Mentally Disabled start up new projects," he says.

The Ettaieb family: Determined to make their home of Gafsa better for others and themselves.

Hopes for the future

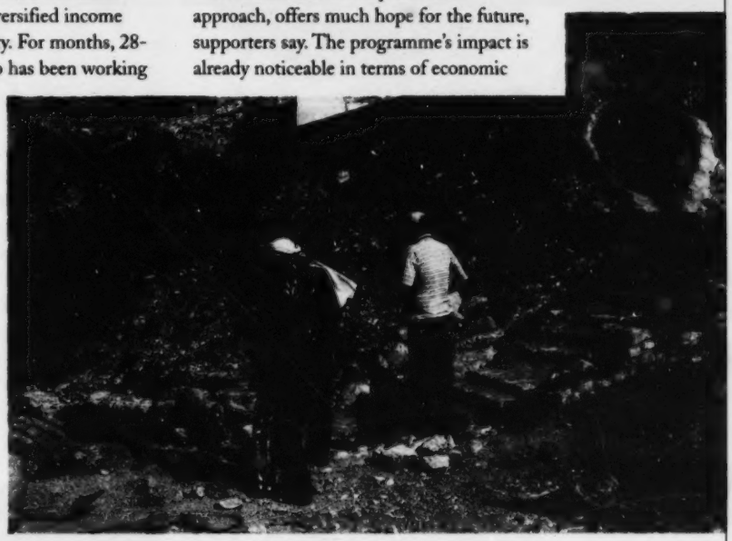
Meanwhile, in Sned-Djebel, an ancient Berber village in Gafsa, efforts are under way to turn the area's dramatic limestone grottoes into a tourist destination. (In Roman times it was a well-travelled crossroads between northern Tunisia and the Sahara.) There are also plans for a local heritage museum and other amenities designed to build a diversified income base for the community. For months, 28-year-old Amor Ettaieb has been working here to help restore and re-develop the grottoes, famous from antiquity, and which after long abandonment people now say seem to be recovering a soul that appeared to have been lost forever.

Never having had the opportunity to complete his schooling, Mr. Ettaieb says he now has ambitions of using the savings from his current job to open a livestock-breeding business, eventually. "This is where I was born and this is where I intend to stay," he says. His wife Aicha, 24, is also being trained as a weaver, thanks to the LHDP initiative. She says she has plans to open an educational facility of her own. "I would like to offer young women in my region an opportunity to undergo practical training that will one day enable them to hold a proper job," she says. Support for the emancipation of rural women, and reducing educational disparities also happen to be among UNDP's primary objectives in addressing social challenges in Tunisia.

Ariel Francais, UNDP's Resident Representative in Tunisia, says that the participatory development initiative under way has attracted an impressive range of participants. Meanwhile, "the decentralized cooperation commitment on the Italian side mobilizes additional funds to finance projects." These range from the restoration work done on Berber grottoes, carried out by young students from Sardinia, to technical support provided by the region of Lazio (around Rome).

The Gafsa LHDP pilot, despite its local boundaries and experimental approach, offers much hope for the future, supporters say. The programme's impact is already noticeable in terms of economic achievement, income generation, environmental conservation and promotion of the region's heritage. It has spurred a dynamic process involving local people as both the main actors and beneficiaries of projects. As a result, and at the request of the Tunisian Government, UNDP in its capacity as the UN's global development network is advocating that current and prospective partners—especially local authorities in other Mediterranean countries—help expand the programme, in order to better the lives of many more poor people here. ■

In the Berber village of Sned-Djebel: Plans to turn the area's ancient limestone grottoes into a desert tourist attraction.

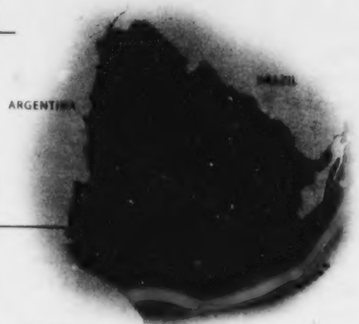


Anis Souadi is a reporter in Tunis for the daily newspaper, La Presse.

BUILDING NETWORKS TO FIGHT POVERTY

Reinforcing Social Safety Nets in Uruguay

BY PABLO VIERCI



MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY

The Old Town is softly lit by the afternoon colours of autumn as we make our way to the home of a single mother named Romina* in the heart of this city's historic old town.

The building we are entering is a large one of noble appearance but faded glory, with balustrades and elegant ironwork decorating the balconies. It used to be a hotel in the early 20th Century but has long since been converted into apartments. When we get to the second floor we catch a glimpse of four-year-old Daniela, who has been waiting for us by a marble staircase. She presses a bright, smiling face against the iron railings, shouting: "Here they come, Mommie!"

As we enter, Susana Gomez, a specialist in children's motor skills development, and teacher Valeria De Mello greet Romina and her three other young children. Ms. Gomez hands her a tin of homemade cookies; they have been baked especially for the occasion by members of the local citizen's association that runs the neighbourhood's Child and Family Care Centre (CAIF). A visit to Romina at home is something that requires patience and a lot of dedication, in order to achieve what is hardest when it comes to people who have lost hope: gaining their trust.

Out of a large leather shoulder bag the cookies came in, Ms. Gomez also pulls out some personal papers and other items for the children. There is a birth certificate application for Jonathan, another for Daniela's school registration, a drawing for Nicolás and a rag doll for Jofre. "I feel like Father Christmas," she says with a smile.

Photo: UNDP Uruguay

Montevideo, the capital city.

An equalization programme

The CAIF Plan, a programme supported by the United Nations Children's Fund and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), is a joint effort of the Government of Uruguay and community-based organizations to care for children under the age of four who are from families living in precarious social circumstances. Drawing on its broad circle of partners within the UN system and the government, UNDP helped start the initiative in 1988 as a leveling tool. "The programme tries to break the vicious circle of poverty, by tackling handicaps right at the start of life, in a country which for decades has been building an equity-based model of development," says Martin Santiago, UNDP Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator in Uruguay.

Adds Maria Isabel Bove, Managing Director of the CAIF Plan: "In this way they enter the education system with equal opportunities and they receive longer and better schooling that leads to their social advancement."

CAIFs look after children under the age of four.

The Plan's main objective is to attract impoverished children and their families to the local CAIF Centres, with their teams of educators, psychologists, motor skills experts, nutritionists and social workers. The aim is to strengthen family

Photo: Carlos Correa/UNDP

A protective environment makes for a healthy start in the critical formative years of early childhood.

**At CAIF's request, CHOICES has withheld the actual names of beneficiaries to protect their privacy.*

Photos: Carlos Cisneros/UNDP

Kindergarten teacher Lilian Abil listens intently to a little boy at the CAIF Centre in Montevideo's Nuevo Paris neighbourhood.

unity and promote social networks for them while attending to the children's physical, mental, social and emotional needs. But if the families do not come to a Centre, as in Romina's case, then its specialists try to arrange home visits.

Social exclusion on the rise

While this country has Latin America's lowest proportion of households and individuals living in poverty, and ranks high on the international ladder of human development, Romina and her children belong to another Uruguay. For over the past two decades, despite being one of the most equitable societies in Latin America, the rise in unemployment, the number of street children and the increasing vulnerability among the poor has taken a toll on the social fabric of this very homogeneous land.

"Instead of trying to tackle problems like drugs, alcoholism and dropping out of school, we have concentrated on people's basic ability, regardless of their circumstances, to find ways of protecting themselves. It certainly shed a much different light on the rearing of children in their early lives," says Mrs. Bove. The CAIF Centres move in before the problems arise. In the first 36 months of life, children acquire the ability to think, to speak, to learn and to reason, while they build the foundations of the values and social behaviour patterns they will have as adults. Deficiencies in the early years can result in failure when they are schoolchildren and preventing such personal catastrophes is the prime objective of the CAIF Plan.

Across Uruguay there are 205 CAIF Centres caring for 20,000 children. At one of the Montevideo centres about 40 happy children run around a large house and garden. The facility has three play rooms and a dining-room that features an aquarium filled with a variety of tropical fish.

As the families come to fetch their children at the end of the afternoon they reflect on their experiences: "Since she has been coming to this kindergarten, my daughter has started to express herself a lot more. She comes home with new things and has stories to tell," says Lourdes, 23, and seven months pregnant. "It seems to me they are happier and more responsible," adds 19-year-old Irene, another young mother of a pre-schooler, who is carrying a tiny baby in her arms, as well.

Graciela Vásquez is an inspector for public pre-school education, a programme launched after a 1997 reform that made education compulsory for children aged four and five. "Children admitted to pre-school education after attending a CAIF Centre have an altogether different mentality, where feelings contribute not only to social integration but also to their development and learning ability," she says. "The difference is like night and day."

Building and earning trust

CAIF Centres are managed by local non-profit associations, which receive subsidies from the government. These groups have their own technical teams and work out individual strategies to attract children. Given that many poor families are reluctant to approach a Centre because of their particular circumstances, a premium is placed on finding sensitive ways to persuade them out of their reluctance, while being careful not to promise more than is feasible. "But when we regain their trust, then we immediately achieve results," says Ms. Gomez. She should know: as we leave, Romina asks her to draw a map showing the exact location of the CAIF Centre in relation to her neighbourhood.

As we leave the apartment building, dusk is falling over the historic centre of Montevideo. Ms. Gomez and Ms. De Mello decide to walk home along the seafront, to let the sea breeze soothe their thoughts and restore their energy. This was the last of their five home visits today. Tomorrow they will try to win the trust of another five families. ■

Pablo Vierci, a screenwriter, is also editor of the Uruguayan magazines Montevideo Ciudad Abierta *and* ACDE Revista.

Fertility rates in Uruguay are generally low but some 40 percent of the country's children are born to women in poverty.

A Global Compact with Solid Foundations

BY GORDON BROWN

DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

Over the past year, since the tragic events of 11 September 2001, the international community has begun to forge a historic new deal between developed and developing countries, working together to address the causes of global poverty.

From the United Nations Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey to the G8 Summit in Kananaskis and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, 2002 has laid the foundations for this new deal. Its aim is that no developing country genuinely committed to corruption-free policies, good governance, stability, trade, investment and economic development should be denied the chance to achieve its goals on health, education and poverty reduction, for want of resources.

It is inspired by the 2015 Millennium Development Goals and, as the developed world has renewed its commitment to these targets throughout 2002, the United Kingdom has continued to play a full role under the leadership of Clare Short, Secretary for International Development. Progress has been made across four key areas: aid, debt relief, health and education.

On aid, pledges from the European Union and the United States made at Monterrey last March will—from 2006—raise an extra US$12 billion each year for education, health and anti-poverty programmes. Following the G8 meeting, possibly half or more of these funds will be going to Africa. This is a historic advance—a reversal of the 20-year decline in aid levels.

But we must go further. The report of the High-Level Panel on Financing for Development, chaired by former President of Mexico Ernesto Zedillo, estimated last year that if we are to achieve the 2015 targets, at least an extra $50 billion of aid will be required every year. Development partners must examine as a matter of urgency the means by which the benefits of the agreed new resources can be maximized—both through improved aid effectiveness and levering in additional funds.

UK Government

Development partners must examine as a matter of urgency the means by which the benefits of the agreed new resources can be maximized.

One option would be that by channeling the extra resources promised at Monterrey internationally, through a financing facility, and with national governments offering a guarantee—either through callable reserves or appropriate collateral as security—additional aid contributions could be levered up to raise the extra funds needed to meet the 2015 goals.

2002 has also seen progress on debt relief with an extra $6 billion being provided so far this year—taking the total to $62 billion across 26 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs). At the G8 summit, leaders agreed to fund the financing shortfall in the HIPC Initiative, pledging an extra $1 billion. In return for good governance, prudent new borrowing and sound debt management, the G8 will take action to secure the participation of all creditors, and ensure a robust exit from debt.

The World Bank's "Education for All" fast tracking initiative, launched in May, provides the first focused financing framework for achieving the Education for All goals. At the subsequent G8 Summit, Heads of Government agreed to increase bilateral assistance significantly for countries that have demonstrated strong, credible policies and financial commitments to these goals. In the coming months, the UK will work to take forward this agreement while urging other donor governments and the multilateral development banks to join our renewed effort to guarantee that, by 2015, every child can go to school.

We must also accelerate support to build universal and equitable health care systems ensuring that the World Bank, UN agencies and other donors work together so that developing countries with credible policy commitments have the resources necessary to strengthen health systems. This year has also seen the launch of the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. To date, more than $2.1 billion has been pledged to the Fund, of which the UK has committed $200 million over five years. In addition to ongoing commitments to combat these three killer diseases, the G8 Heads of Government have committed to provide sufficient resources to eradicate polio by 2005.

So 2002 has seen considerable progress towards a new deal between developed and developing countries—a new development compact that is building the foundations for a virtuous circle of debt relief, poverty reduction and sustainable development.

In the months ahead, we must ensure that these important steps become decisive ones. ■

Gordon Brown is the United Kingdom's Finance Minister. He also chairs the International Monetary Fund's International Monetary and Financial Committee.

City-to-City Networking to Fight Poverty

BY ANNE-MARIE LIZIN

In the global struggle against poverty, strengthening capacity to tackle issues at the grassroots level is becoming a key objective of civic leaders throughout the world.

One of the strongest signs of this is that so many of them are intent on sharing—and expanding—their knowledge of local solutions that work. Earlier this year, more than 600 delegates from nearly 100 countries gathered in Huy, Belgium to do just that, at the third United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty (WACAP) global forum.

Cities are in the forefront of the war on poverty in this first decade of the new century. Home now to nearly 50 percent of the world's six billion people, urban areas are expected to account for more than 60 percent of humanity before 2030, with most of this growth in developing countries.

The WACAP global network of member cities provides UNDP with a very practical tool for developing policies in support of sustainable human development by way of information exchanges, ideas and projects that result in down-to-earth sharing of experiences among civic representatives.

In taking concrete action against poverty in cities, governments that have started to decentralize are on the right track. In this connection, the WACAP Forum has proved to be an excellent mechanism for examining the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to decentralization, as some African and Western European public authorities have been doing. Liège, Belgium, for example, has teamed up with Lubumbaschi, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to modernize its civil registry; more cities may follow suit.

Enriched by mutual experiences

Empowering city administrations is an approach that should go hand-in-hand with efforts to strengthen democracy. Often, however, newly-elected representatives find themselves at a loss, once faced with their responsibilities and the expectations of the communities that have placed their hopes in them through the ballot box. Enabling newly-elected officials to shoulder their duties effectively and assisting them in making the best use of resources and sharing best practices to achieve essential objectives is a key role played by UNDP through WACAP.

Another positive effect of the Alliance has been to generate solidarity in an interconnected world in which information circulates but generosity is often absent. Rich cities can give to poor cities, but poor cities can also offer examples of effective policies. These include supporting the organization of street sweepers, establishment of micro-credit facilities for women living in deprived neighbourhoods, and ensuring that municipal budgets take proper account of women's needs—as in the case of La Paz, Bolivia, thanks to assistance from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

There have also been beneficial interactions in which knowledge has flowed from South to North, with regard to the place of women in cities. The City of Norwich, England, for example, has found inspiration in Bangladesh's lending circles and has begun a micro-finance loan scheme for unemployed women wanting to open businesses, yet unable to obtain start-up credit from traditional banks. City authorities in Norwich also provide training to ensure that such borrowers are proficient at managing their loans.

Office of the Mayor, Huy

Many town halls around the world have established bodies to lobby on behalf of women before mayors and other elected officials. Forums like that in Huy have shown how useful such discussions can be in terms of social motivation for local women, in making them feel they are being listened to and their concerns given due consideration. UNIFEM, for example, highlighted its training work during Kosovo's post-war reconstruction period, when weaker groups were being reintegrated. In Kosovo, men traditionally are unaccustomed to letting women take part in political decision making; but attitudes are changing thanks to UNIFEM's influence.

The sharing of experiences and knowledge among cities, an essential ingredient of success for development policies, has been unexpectedly rich, and demonstrates the growing need for such contacts. The rising number of cities that are represented and their desire to learn from one another shows the breadth of the movement that is gathering pace. Cities, building blocks of social life, may prove as well to be the building blocks of a more democratic future and a successful drive against poverty. The next Forum is in Rome in 2004. ■

Anne-Marie Lizin is Mayor of Huy, Belgium and an independent expert on poverty issues with the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, in Geneva.

Empowering city administrations is an approach that should go hand-in-hand with efforts to strengthen democracy.

WORLD'S LARGEST CITIES (In millions)

2000		2015 (projected)	
1 Tokyo	26.4	1 Tokyo	26.4
2 Mexico City	18.1	2 Bombay	26.1
3 Bombay	18.1	3 Lagos	23.2
4 São Paulo	17.8	4 Dhaka	21.1
5 New York	16.6	5 São Paulo	20.4
6 Lagos	13.4	6 Karachi	19.2
7 Los Angeles	13.1	7 Mexico City	19.2
8 Calcutta	12.9	8 New York	17.4
9 Shanghai	12.9	9 Jakarta	17.3
10 Buenos Aires	12.6	10 Calcutta	17.3
11 Dhaka	12.3	11 Delhi	16.8
12 Karachi	11.8	12 Metro Manila	14.8
13 Delhi	11.7	13 Shanghai	14.6
14 Jakarta	11.0	14 Los Angeles	14.1
15 Osaka	11.0	15 Buenos Aires	14.1

Source: World Urbanization Prospects, *Population Division of the United Nations.*

New Era of Partnership in Africa

DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

Even for skeptics, it was clear that history was in the making—a gathering of 40 African Heads of State to write the final chapter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and participate in the unveiling of its successor, the African Union (AU).

The back-to-back Summits—the last of the OAU's annual meetings followed by the AU's inaugural assembly—took place amid the warm breezes of Durban, South Africa in July, perhaps adding to the hopeful atmosphere that prevailed there.

"Thirty-nine years after the Organization of African Unity was formed... Africa has convened in Durban to decide what to do about itself," South African President Thabo Mbeki told more than 40 African national leaders and over 20,000 others who attended a colourful open-air ceremony at the city's Absa rugby stadium. "Africans have adopted the Constitutive Act of the African Union which clearly defines the common objectives we as Africans have committed ourselves to—and the tasks that lie ahead of us," he said.

President Mbeki, the AU's first chairman, pointed out that the new organization's

objectives include achieving greater regional cooperation among its 53 member states and developing new forms of partnership. Special attention is to be paid to mobilizing women and the private sector, promoting peace for sustainable development, fostering democracy and good governance, fighting terrorism, cultivating human rights, investing in education, eradicating poverty, battling unemployment and promoting investment. Modelled after the European Union, the AU will also have a Pan-African parliament, Court of Justice with human rights jurisdiction, Central Bank and Peace and Security Council.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan echoed President Mbeki's optimistic tones but looked to Europe's experience to strike a note of caution. "Let us be careful not to mistake hope for achievement. Let us not risk jeopardizing what we have already achieved. And let us not imagine that, once proclaimed, our Union will become a reality without further effort," he cautioned. "We have a much larger geographical space [than Europe] to cover, with far fewer resources. We start at a much earlier stage of development. And many of our economies are saddled with unsustainable debt, or crippled by the legacy of wars in which, over generations, outside powers exploited and prolonged African quarrels."

UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown, who also attended the African Union Assembly, said he too is optimistic—largely because of changes within the region and in the wider international arena. "President Bush has just increased America's foreign aid budget by 50 percent," Mr. Malloch Brown told reporters. "Admittedly it was from a pretty nominal base, but it is the biggest increase approved by any American President since John F. Kennedy, and Europe and Japan are expected to follow suit." Willingness of African leaders to undertake economic and political reform and the eagerness of rich countries to work with them could result in a new push for development in Africa, he said.

In a first step towards establishing a privileged partnership with the new African Union, UNDP is providing US$1 million to help craft a resource mobilization strategy and framework for integrating the New Partnership for Africa's Development—a plan to help move Africa towards growth and development, into the AU's work. UNDP is also supporting communications activities aimed at raising the visibility of the AU during its transitional phase. ■

—By Cassandra Waldon, Communications Specialist, UNDP New York.

Dana Murphy PMO/CPM, Canada

Africa on the agenda. From left: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria and President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa at the 2002 G-8 Summit in Canada.

Call for Greater Pluralism and Diversity

"Richer than it is developed," is an apt description of the Arab world's socio-economic progress and quality of life, argue the authors of the first *Arab Human Development Report* (AHDR) for the region's 22 countries.

Published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in cooperation with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the inaugural AHDR is intended "to help create an Arab identity of understanding and response around some of the most pressing development issues facing the region," says Rima Khalaf Hunaidi, Assistant Administrator and Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Arab States.

The Arab region reduced poverty and inequality dramatically in the 20th Century "and it can do again in the 21st Century," the report concludes. Yet for two decades, growth in per capita income has been the lowest in the world, except for sub-Saharan Africa. If such a trend continued, it would take 140 years for average per capita income to double. Some other regions are set to achieve such growth in less than a decade.

The team of independent experts who wrote the report pulls no punches in detailing other causes for concern. They focus, in particular, on the region's three most outstanding deficits: exclusion of women from social, economic and

political life; exclusion of most citizens of whatever gender from politics and governance; and exclusion of most of the region from the modern, knowledge-based economy. More than half of Arab women cannot read or write and the maternal mortality rate—double that of Latin America and the Caribbean—is four times greater than for industrialized countries. Arab spending per person on education dropped from one-fifth of that in industrialized countries in 1980 to one-tenth as much by the mid-1990s. Overall, the Internet connectivity rate is lower than in sub-Saharan Africa.

Perhaps the most telling perspective on the issues that the report addresses comes from young Arabs, more than half of whom told pollsters that their future lies in emigrating. Indeed, the report points out that all too many of their educated and skilled forebears have done just that, with more than a million highly qualified Arabs already contributing to the prosperity of industrialized countries. Yet while the region exports its technical skills, it is weak at importing knowledge from elsewhere. The entire Arab world, with its population of 300 million (five percent of humanity) translates only about 300 books a year, one-fifth of that which Greece translates; Spain annually translates more books than the Arab world has done in 1,000 years.

The AHDR's authors contend that the smallness of many Arab states demands much greater regional economic cooperation for them and the region as a whole to prosper. At the same time they take pains to debunk a distorted global perception of untold Arab wealth. Despite the region's oil riches, the Gross Domestic Product of all Arab states combined is less than that of Spain. Indeed, the report shows that the oil-based economies have grown more slowly than their more diversified counterparts over the last decade.

Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations

Published by UNDP and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, 168 pages.

ISBN:
English: 92-1-126147-3
French: 92-1-226009-8
Arabic Sales number: A.02.III.B.9

Web site: http://www.undp.org/rbas

A great advantage of a regional report like this first AHDR is that it can be critical and objective without alienating the governments whose habits it is trying to change. It accentuates the positive in singling out states like Kuwait and Qatar that have made steps towards democracy, and those such as Egypt and Jordan, which have improved women's legal status. On the information and communications technologies front, the report highlights Dubai's Internet City initiative, which has wired schools, homes and businesses, and is succeeding in attracting leading international companies.

But above all, this landmark study argues that greater social cohesion is the essential foundation for solid economic progress across the region. Enhancing political rights and encouraging broader participation with "policies of inclusion" is likely to result in big dividends for societies and economies, helping them to be more resilient in the face of future challenges, it contends. ■

—By Ian Williams, UN correspondent for the US weekly magazine, The Nation *and London's biweekly* Middle East International.

Measurable Results Make all the Difference

When world leaders adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration two years ago, among the many things they resolved to do was "create an environment—at the national and global levels alike—which is conducive to development and the elimination of poverty." A superb tool in support of this aim has now been put in place, one that promises to be both critical to steering developing countries towards effective policies to reduce poverty and an excellent means of informing the public about where progress is or is not being made.

With the backing of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), other members of the UN's global development network and the World Bank, several countries have already produced progress reports on how they are doing in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set out in the September 2000 Declaration. Under this approach, the UN Secretary-General is to report annually to the General Assembly on global progress towards achieving various MDGs, with a comprehensive report every five years, starting in 2005.

Meanwhile, by 2004 each developing country is supposed to have issued an analysis of its own progress. A model of its kind, one of the first of these studies—from Nepal—notes that "such reports are needed to keep the eyes of the world fixed on the MDGs." The report is frank about the harsh realities facing this Himalayan nation's 24 million people as they seek to address the challenges of rooting out poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality; reducing under-five mortality; improving maternal health; reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other killer diseases, and ensuring environmental sustainability

Along with the authoritative accounting in the Nepal study, there is an absence of sugar-coating. The country's capacity to monitor and evaluate its progress towards meeting MDGs, for example, is rated as being strong in only four of 60 categories. Food insecurity remains the principal cause of insecurity for the majority of the Nepalese people it says. "Not only do a large proportion of Nepalese go to bed hungry, food insecurity remains a consistent topic of deeply-worrying daily discussions among many households and communities."

Over the past 10 years, "Nepal has made satisfactory progress in the areas of social and human development," according to Prithivi Raj Ligal, Vice-Chairman of Nepal's National Planning Commission. "More people have access to basic infrastruc-

Read the report at: www.un.org.np/publications/mdg/index.html

ture and services today than a decade ago. Yet about half of the country's children under five are underweight, the literacy rate among women is particularly low and while the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Nepal is still confined to vulnerable groups, the prevalence rate is increasing alarmingly," notes Mr. Ligal. Moreover, political instability, reflected in the conflict between the government and Maoist insurgents, along with growing fiscal instability and shrinking export markets, are major challenges that affect Nepal's hopes of meeting its MDG goals.

In addition to Nepal, among countries that have so far produced MDG progress reports since Tanzania became the first to do so last year are Albania, Bolivia, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Mauritius, Senegal and Viet Nam. About a dozen more nations are expected to issue theirs in the next few months.

For more information, go to: www.undp.org/mdg. ■

—By David Todd, Editor of CHOICES.

A Different Kind of Looking-Glass

Over the past few years, the United Kingdom-based charity Peace Child International has achieved a measure of what its members like to call "notoriety" through creative interpretations of important United Nations documents that are distributed to schools and youth groups across the globe.

Thus Agenda 21, the centrepiece achievement of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, became *Rescue Mission: Planet Earth.* (It sold 300,000 copies in 18 languages.) The United Nations Environment Programme's *Global Environment Outlook 2000* became *Pachamama,* an ancient Inca word meaning "Mother Earth." The Universal Declaration of Human Rights became *Stand Up for Your Rights.*

Peace Child, which has non-governmental organization (NGO) status at the UN—and numbers some 500 high-school groups in 120 countries—has now completed its most ambitious project yet. It has summarized the first decade's worth of annual UN Development Programme Human Development Reports (HDRs) into a single, illustrated 96-page volume.

According to Richard Jolly, former Principal Coordinator of the HDR, after seeing *Rescue Mission: Planet Earth* he became "totally convinced that a parallel publication on Human Development could play a major role in getting the human development message across to the next generation of young people—a group often eager to learn the lifestyles and philosophies that go beyond the market and maximization of consumption or profits."

Sustainable Human Development (96 pages) Published (in English) by Evans Brothers Ltd., London

ISBN Number: 0237 523 175 Available from Peace Child International, The White House, Buntingford, Herts, SG9 9AH, UK

Price (including postage anywhere in the world): US$15.95, Euros 17.95, £10.95 Fax or e-mail orders to: +44 176 3277 4460 or david@peacechild.org

Guided by Mr. Jolly and current HDR Director/Lead Writer Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, *Sustainable Human Development* is a landmark textbook for teachers, filled with young people's illustrations, stories, questions and ideas for further study. In their preface to the book, the editorial team of young people from around the world who brought it to fruition write that they are in awe of the encyclopedic HDRs, which they call the "Rolls-Royce" of UN publications. As one member of the editorial panel, Juhi Nagarkatti of India, puts it: "A crazy bunch of young people from 15 countries made our book grow from piles of pictures, essays and blank pages into something great."

Much of the exhilaration and fun of composing the book has filtered through, making clear that human development is no dry, academic subject but something that inspires strong passions, vivid emotions and powerful certainties among young people. As such, it should be a reminder to professionals who specialize in this field of endeavour of the importance of the work they do, and the touching faith placed in it by a rising generation, especially of young people who live in developing countries.

Or as Ms. Fukuda-Parr observes: "Human development isn't just a report, not just a technocratic concept and analytical tools. It is about ideals. Peace Child's book confirms that it's a movement." ■

—By David Woolcombe, Director of Peace Child International, United Kingdom.

Inaugural Equator Prizes Awarded

Among the highlights of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was the recognition of a series of extraordinary community-based initiatives to reduce poverty and conserve biodiversity in tropical countries.

The occasion was the announcement in Johannesburg of the inaugural Equator Prizes, sponsored by the Equator Initiative—a new international partnership programme that focuses on the region of the Earth that holds the greatest concentration of poverty as well as of biological diversity. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was one of the Equator Initiative's founding sponsors. Other members include Brasil-Connects, the Government of Canada, International Development Research Centre, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, The Nature Conservancy, Television Trust for the Environment and the United Nations Foundation.

The six prizes awarded on 30 August recognized local achievements with the potential to enhance South-South capacity development as well as strengthen public policy-making and the generation of new knowledge.

"The passion, dedication and courage with which these communities have adopted the cause of local sustainable development are a source of inspiration to the entire global community," said United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in congratulating the recipients.

The winning projects—each has also been awarded US$30,000—were selected from among more than 420 nominees in 77 countries and by an international jury of eminent experts on human development issues, including two Nobel Peace Prize laureates.

Steve McCormick, President of The Nature Conservancy, presents a representative of a winning community with the Equator Prize 2002.

Awarded for their community efforts to reduce poverty and conserve biodiversity were:

- Brazil's Associação Vida Verde da Amazônia (AVIVE)
- Fiji's Locally-Managed Marine Area Network
- Belize's Toledo Institute for Development and Environment
- Malaysia's Uma Bawang Residents' Association
- Kenya's Il Ngwesi Group Ranch and Tanzania's Suledo Forest Community (joint winners).
- Costa Rica's Iniciativa Talamanca for an outstanding community initiative associated with a World Heritage Site.

In an unexpected turn of events, Steve McCormick of The Nature Conservancy announced that the 20 other project finalists will each receive $30,000 from his organization.

"Demonstrating that partnerships among individuals, communities, governments and civil society organizations bring great dividends for both local livelihoods and the environment, these communities are models of the kind of sustainable future UNDP believes is possible," said UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown.

Representatives of each of the 27 Equator Prize finalist communities shared their experiences at WSSD with representatives of other communities working towards local sustainability in various parts of the world. "The lessons that these communities identified during the Summit will form the basis for the Equator Initiative's continuing work," said Programme Manager Sean Southey of UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy.

While there are many ingenious and effective ways through which indigenous and other local communities are rising to the challenges of acute poverty and threats to biodiversity, their innovations remain largely unknown. Spreading awareness of them through its new awards programme is seen by the Equator Initiative as an effective, low-cost means for raising global awareness of the many successful local approaches to sustainable development being undertaken in the developing world. For further information, visit www.equatorinitiative.org. ■ *—By David Todd, Editor of* CHOICES.

Representatives of the 27 Equator Prize 2002 finalist communities receive Certificates of Achievement.

Equator Prize 2002 Jury

H.E. Dr. Oscar Arias Sanchez
Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress
Nobel Peace Laureate

H.R.H. Princess Basma Bint Talal
Royal Hashemite Fund for Human Development, Jordan

Professor Calestous Juma
Director, Science, Technology and Innovative Program, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University
Chancellor, University of Guyana

Ms. Yolanda Kakabadse Navarro
President, IUCN-The World Conservation Union

Mrs. Graça Machel
President, Mozambique National Commission for UNESCO

Mrs. Rigoberta Menchu Tum
President, Rigoberta Menchu Tum Foundation
Nobel Peace Laureate

Dr. Emil Salim
Chairman, Preparatory Committee for WSSD
Chairman, Indonesian Biodiversity Foundation

Prof. M.S. Swaminathan
UNESCO Cousteau Chair in Ecotechnology
Chairman, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation

DANNY GLOVER

UNDP GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

HIV/AIDS and Africa's Poverty

Lack of money forces people to make unpleasant and sometimes self-destructive choices in order to survive.

My fight against HIV/AIDS is a personal one. I have a brother who is affected by the disease. As an artist, I also have had numerous friends and colleagues who have suffered from it and died. As a result, I have learned about its path of destruction through individuals into families and extending into communities, societies and nations. I know about its obvious and not so obvious impact on those it leaves behind. It was for these reasons that I decided two years ago to focus a good portion of my work as UNDP's Goodwill Ambassador on building a global movement to fight HIV/AIDS wherever it surfaces and—particularly—in Africa, which has been hardest hit.

The statistics are staggering. More than 450 million people today live with HIV: nine out of 10 are in developing countries; three-quarters of those afflicted live in sub-Saharan Africa. In Botswana, children born today can expect to live to 36 years. That's about half as long as they would have been able to live in their country if AIDS did not exist. Thirteen million children have lost either a mother or father or both parents to the pandemic since its medical detection three decades ago.

Over the last two years, I have tried to learn as much as I can about various aspects of HIV/AIDS in order to be a better communicator to audiences worldwide that need to be awakened to the damage it inflicts, and how they can protect themselves. Part of my learning process has taken me to visit townships near Johannesburg and Durban, South Africa—the global epicentre of the epidemic at the time of the 13th International AIDS Conference in July 2000.

Along with UNDP Youth Emissary and Philadelphia 76er basketball star Dikembe Mutombo of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and other AIDS activists from around the world, I visited the unmarked grave of Gugu Dlamini. She had been stoned to death by her neighbours for having stated publicly that she was living with AIDS. Afterwards, we went to visit her township. People of all ages were there to greet us. They lived in modest homes but shared whatever they had. Children and adults from the neighbourhood came clustering around the front door of our host's home to watch the activities inside.

We were treated like kings, despite being surrounded by abject poverty. A local entertainment group showed us how they were getting information across to young people through pop songs and dances. As I listened to the messages they were conveying, and saw how hard people were trying to do it in such creative ways, I kept asking myself: why has Africa been hit so hard?

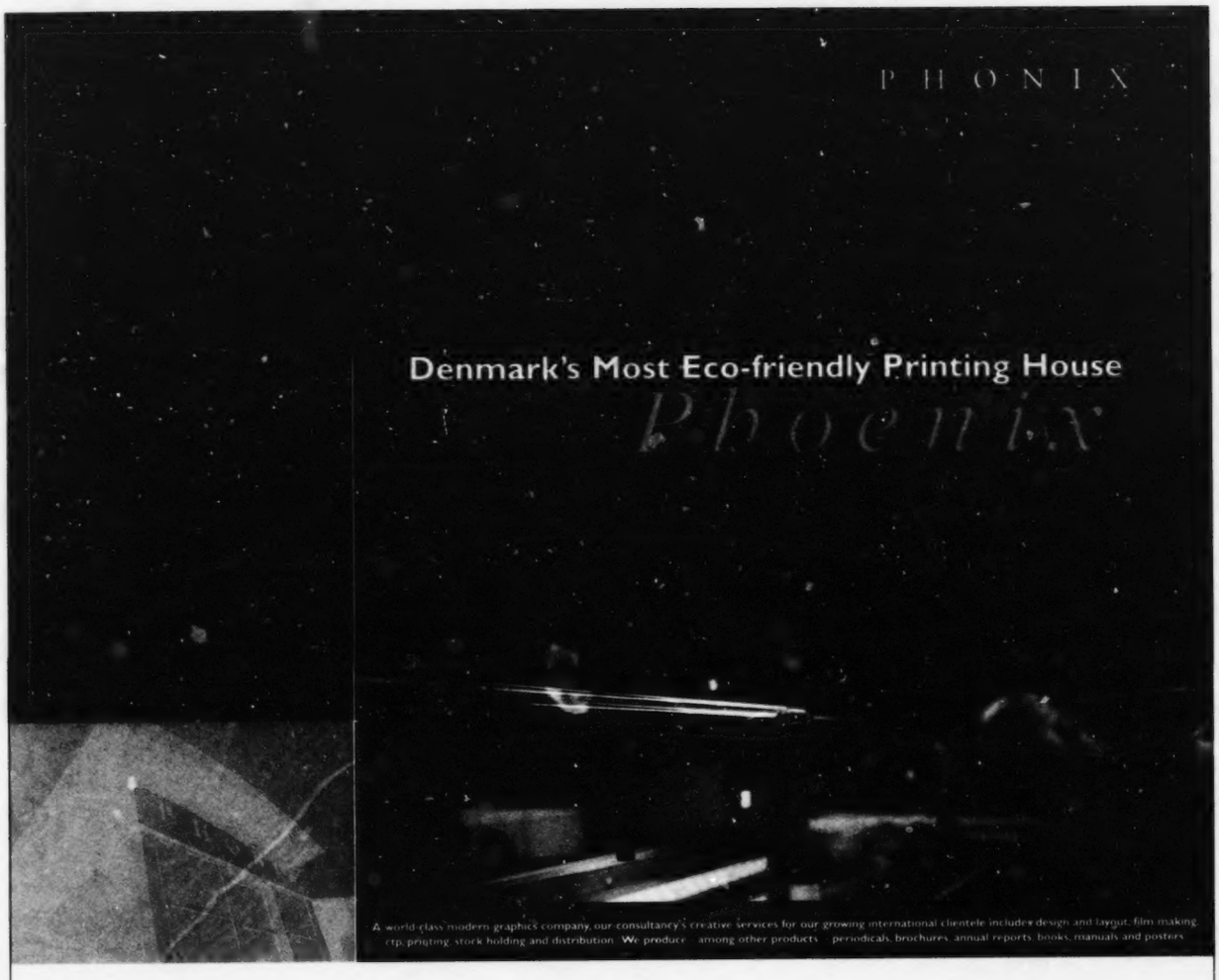
There are some very obvious reasons. A disproportionate number of the world's poorest countries are in Africa. As a result, there is no money in them to build strong infrastructure to support adequate, well-distributed health care systems. Even if, for argument's sake, such infrastructure were in place, it would not be long before it would disintegrate due to lack of funding to maintain it.

Lack of money forces people to make unpleasant and sometimes self-destructive choices in order to survive. For instance, should I buy food for my wife and children or should I buy condoms? Given that I have an illness requiring antibiotics, should I use the available syringe that someone else has used, since I can't get a clean one because the hospital supply has been depleted for months? Should a 13-year-old child become a prostitute in order to be able to support her younger siblings after their parents have died of AIDS?

There is a correlation between the extent of poverty and the HIV/AIDS epidemic in a given society. The poorer a community is, the higher the incidence of HIV/AIDS there. The Centers for Disease Control in the United States of America have documented this phenomenon, particularly among the African-American and Latino communities. That's why fighting HIV/AIDS requires a holistic approach that also addresses the issues of poverty. One dilemma feeds the other. ■

UNDP Goodwill Ambassador Danny Glover visits a Soweto, South Africa youth association that is helping gang members break free of poverty and violence.

Danny Glover has been a UNDP Goodwill Ambassador since March 1998.


PHOENIX
Denmark's Most Eco-friendly Printing House
Phoenix
A world-class modern graphics company, our consultancy's creative services for our growing international clientele includes design and layout, film making, ctp, printing, stock holding and distribution. We produce - among other products - periodicals, brochures, annual reports, books, manuals and posters

2001 European Environmental Reporting Awards

The European Environmental Reporting Awards Management Committee,

together with The Institute of State Authorized Public Accountants in Denmark

have named our latest accounts for stakeholders report entitled

"Facts, pride and admissions"

as Winner in the category:

Medium sized companies - Best environmental reporting in Europe

If you would like to read the report, please visit our Web site at:

www.phoenix-print.dk

PHOENIX

Soren Nymarks Vej 15

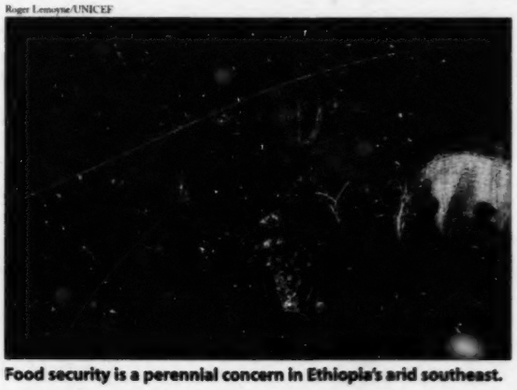
DK-8270 Aarhus/Hojbjerg

Telephone: +45 87 33 66 99

www.phoenix-print.dk

MATTERS OF FACT

Roger Lemoyne/UNICEF



Food security is a perennial concern in Ethiopia's arid southeast.

The amount of money that the **richest 1%** of the world's people make each year equals what the **poorest 57%** make. ● The share of the world's people living in extreme **poverty** fell from **29%** to **23%** between 1990 and 1999. ● Primary school **enrolment** rose from 80% to 84% of the world's children between 1990 and 1998. ● Since 1990, **800 million** people have gained access to improved **water** supplies and 750 million to improved sanitation. ● Farm **subsidies** in the **30** member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development are more than 6 times what OECD donor countries together spend each year on development **aid**. ● Fifty-two countries experienced a decline in GDP in the 1990s; 20 of these are in sub-Saharan Africa. ● A girl born in **Japan** today may have a **50% chance** of seeing the **22nd century**; a newborn in **Afghanistan** has a **1 in 4 chance** of dying before age 5. ● Every day more than 30,000 children around the world die of preventable **diseases**; nearly 14,000 are infected with HIV/AIDS. ● Worldwide, 1.2% of people age **15-49** are living with HIV/AIDS. ● Children account for half of all civilian **casualties** in wars. ● Worldwide there are an estimated **300,000** child soldiers in developing countries. ● Among **73 countries** with data, representing **80%** of the world's people, **48** have seen inequality increase since the 1950s, **16** have experienced no change and **9**—representing **4%** of global population—have seen **inequality** lessen.

Information is drawn from *the Human Development Report 2002, Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World,* published for the United Nations Development Programme. The report (http://www.undp.org/hdr2002) is about how political power and institutions shape human progress across the globe.

United Nations Development Programme
One United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017

UNDP